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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000488

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA AND EUR/CE

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SY, LE, SO, IR

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA IN ADVANCE OF NOVEMBER 3 GYMNICH AND
NOVEMBER 10-11 JUMBO GAERC

REF: STATE 115017

Classified By: ADCM S. Shultz, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

¶1. (C) On October 29, Emboff met with Aljaz Arih, European Correspondent, to deliver reftel's talking points for the November Gymnich and GAERC meetings. Arih stated that the November 3 Gymnich would focus on transatlantic relations and the French had circulated a revised food for thought paper. Arih explained that Slovenia would support the French Presidency's proposal to resume negotiations with Russia at the EU-Russia Summit. He noted that the Foreign Ministers would issue Council conclusions on Iraq, the Middle East, and Bosnia. According to Arih, Iran, Syria, and Doha were not on the GAERC agenda, although the FMs would discuss the Congo, and the Development Ministers would discuss Doha. He noted that while EU Somalia Anti-Piracy Efforts were not on the Foreign Ministers' agenda, the Defense Ministers would prepare for the ESDP. End Summary.

Transatlantic Relations

¶2. (C) Arih stated that the focus of the 2-3 hour Gymnich would be transatlantic relations. Slovenia had just recently received the French Presidency's revised food for thought paper and Arih was unable to comment on it. He speculated that the FMs would have a general discussion on all areas of the relationship. They would talk about cooperation, including on economic issues and trade, and issues of bilateral concern, i.e., the visa waiver program, not just security and regional issues (which the first paper had focused on). Their goal was to reach a common agreement about the future of transatlantic relations, which would be sent in a letter to the new U.S. President.

Russia/Georgia

¶3. (C) Arih said that Slovenia would support the Presidency's proposal to restart negotiations with Russia at the EU-Russia Summit. He explained that in Slovenia's view, Russia had "more or less implemented" the September 8 agreement and Slovenia believed it important to engage in a dialogue with Russia. Arih predicted that the EU and Russia would discuss regional issues at the Summit, along with EU-Russia relations

and the financial crisis. He noted that Slovenia was interested in getting more detailed information about Medvedev's proposal for a new European Security Treaty. Although it was too early to start discussing it, Slovenia thought the Summit might be a good opportunity for Medvedev to provide more details.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

14. (C) Arih noted that the Foreign Ministers would discuss Afghanistan twice - with the Defense Ministers and with the Development Ministers. Slovenia supported the Afghanistan government and "trying to build conditions to enable it to take over." In addition, Slovenia agreed that the international community should do everything possible to create conditions for conducting elections next year. Arih was interested to hear about the proposal for a Frontier Trust Fund.

Other Issues

15. (C) Arih said the EU FMs were very concerned about the situation in the DRC and would discuss it at the GAERC; he added that Slovenia was not a big player in this region and he doubted FM Rupel would speak on this topic. The GAERC would also discuss Iraq and the EU's interest in building relations with Iraq. He expressed concern that the Iraq-U.S. SOFA be finalized because "troops need to be able to stay there." In addition, Burma was on the agenda. Slovenia is

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concerned about the lack of progress and thinks more could be done. Slovenia was also critical of Gamberi as not being "too effective." Arih said that the EU would decide to extend its Special Representative as it was important for the EU to be visible on the ground.

Comment

16. (C) Slovenia is still trying to form a new government. It is possible that a new Foreign Minister would be in place to take part in the November GAERC, but FM Rupel will still be in seat for the Gymnich.
GHAFARI